[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2018-0111; Product Identifier 2017-NM-059-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to supersede Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2017-07-07, for certain Airbus Model A330-200, A330-300, A340-200, and A340-300 series airplanes. AD 2017-07-07 requires repetitive inspections of certain fastener holes, and related investigative and corrective actions if necessary. Since we issued AD 2017-07-07, we have determined that certain other airplanes could also be affected by the unsafe condition specified in AD 2017-07-07. This proposed AD would retain the requirements of AD 2017-07-07 and expand the applicability. We are proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to http://www.regulations.gov. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Fax: 202-493-2251.
- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.
- Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this NPRM, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office – EAL, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone: +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax: +33 5 61 93 45 80; email: airworthiness.A330-A340@airbus.com; Internet: http://www.airbus.com. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Standards Branch, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at http://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0111; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations

office (telephone: 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone: 425-227-1138; fax: 425-227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under the ADDRESSES section. Include "Docket No. FAA-2018-0111; Product Identifier 2017-NM-059-AD" at the beginning of your comments. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this proposed AD. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposed AD based on those comments.

We will post all comments we receive, without change, to http://www.regulations.gov, including any personal information you provide. We will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact we receive about this proposed AD.

Discussion

We issued AD 2017-07-07, Amendment 39-18845 (82 FR 18547, April 20, 2017) ("AD 2017-07-07"), for certain Airbus Model A330-200, A330-300, A340-200, and A340-300 series airplanes with manufacturer serial numbers (MSN) 0176 through 0915

inclusive. These airplanes have Airbus modification 44360 embodied in production. AD 2017-07-07 was prompted by a report of cracking at fastener holes located at frame (FR) 40 on the lower shell panel junction. AD 2017-07-07 requires repetitive inspections of certain fastener holes, and related investigative and corrective actions if necessary. Airbus then introduced the modification 55792 to reinforce the fuselage at FR40. We issued AD 2017-07-07 to detect and correct cracking at FR40 on the lower shell panel junction; such cracking could lead to reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

Since we issued AD 2017-07-07, we have determined that airplanes in the post-modification 55792 configuration could be also affected by crack initiation and propagation at fastener holes located at FR40 on the lower shell panel junction.

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2017-0063, dated April 12, 2017 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or "the MCAI"), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus Model A330-200, A330-300, and A340-200 series airplanes, and Model A340-312 and -313 airplanes. The MCAI states:

> During full scale fatigue test of the Frame (FR) 40 to fuselage skin panel junction, fatigue damage was found. Corrective actions consisted of in-service installation of an internal reinforcing strap on the related junction, as currently required by DGAC [Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile] France AD 1999-448-126(B), which refers to Airbus Service Bulletin (SB) A340-53-4104 Revision 02, and [DGAC] AD 2001-070(B), which refers to Airbus SB A330-53-3093 Revision 04; retrofit improvement of internal reinforcing strap fatigue life through recommended Airbus SB A330-53-3145; and

> introducing a design improvement in production through Airbus mod 44360.
>
> After those actions were implemented, cracks were found on both left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) sides on internal strap, butt strap, keel beam fitting, or forward fitting FR40 flange. These findings were made during embodiment of a FR40 web repair on an A330 aeroplane, and during keel beam replacement on an A340 aeroplane, where the internal strap was removed and a special detailed inspection (SDI) was performed on several holes.
>
> This condition, if not detected and corrected, could affect the structural integrity of the centre fuselage of the aeroplane.
>
> Prompted by these findings, Airbus issued SB A330-53-3215 and SB A340-53-4215, providing inspection instructions. Consequently, EASA issued AD 2014-0136 [which corresponds to FAA AD 2017-07-07] to require repetitive SDI (rototest) of 10 fastener holes located at the FR40 lower shell panel junction on both LH and RH sides and, depending on findings, accomplishment of applicable corrective action(s).
>
> Since that [EASA] AD was issued, prompted by the results of complementary fatigue analyses, it was determined that post-mod 55792 aeroplanes could be also affected by crack initiation and propagation at this area of the fuselage. These analyses demonstrated that post-mod 55792 aeroplanes must follow the same maintenance program as aeroplanes in post-mod 55306 and pre-mod 55792 configuration. Consequently, Airbus published SB A330-53-3215 Revision 02 and SB A340-53-4215 Revision 02 to expand the Effectivity accordingly.
>
> For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD retains the requirements of EASA AD 2014-0136, which is superseded, which now also apply to aeroplanes in post-mod 55792 configuration [the applicability identifies airplanes in post-mod 44360 configuration].

AD 2017-07-07 includes Model A340-311 airplanes in its applicability. Airbus Model A340-311 airplanes are not identified in the applicability of this proposed AD

because those airplanes are not affected by the identified unsafe condition. All of those airplanes are in the pre-Airbus modification 44360 configuration. The MCAI does not include Model A340-311 airplanes in its applicability.

The compliance time ranges between 20,000 flight cycles or 65,400 flight hours and 20,800 flight cycles or 68,300 flight hours, depending on airplane utilization and configuration. The repetitive inspection interval ranges between 14,000 flight cycles or 95,200 flight hours and 24,600 flight cycles or 98,700 flight hours, depending on airplane utilization and configuration. You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the Internet at http://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0111.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR part 51

Airbus has issued Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3215, Revision 02, dated November 23, 2016 ("A330-53-3215, R2"); and Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4215, Revision 02, dated November 23, 2016. This service information describes procedures for repetitive rototest inspections of certain fastener holes, and related investigative and corrective actions if necessary. These documents are distinct since they apply to different airplane models. This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

FAA's Determination and Requirements of this Proposed AD

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with

the State of Design Authority, we have been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI and service information referenced above. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all pertinent information and determined an unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other products of these same type designs.

Differences Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI or Service Information

The MCAI includes Model A340-211 airplanes in its applicability. Airbus Model A340-211 airplanes are not identified in the applicability of this proposed AD because those airplanes are not affected by the identified unsafe condition. All of those airplanes are in the pre-Airbus modification 44360 configuration. We have coordinated this difference with EASA.

Paragraph 1.E. "Compliance," of A330-53-3215, R2, specifies weight variant (WV) 050 in the condition column of table 1, configuration 003. We have determined that for the purposes of this AD, WV060 and WV080 are also affected.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 99 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We estimate the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

Estimated costs

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Inspection	42 work-hours X $85 per hour = $3,570 per inspection cycle	$0	$3,570 per inspection cycle	$353,430 per inspection cycle

We estimate the following costs to do any necessary repairs that are required based on the results of the required inspection. We have no way of determining the number of aircraft that might need these repairs:

On-condition costs

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product
Repair	46 work-hours X $85 per hour = $3,910	$2,358	$6,268

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. "Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs," describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in "Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements." Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

This AD is issued in accordance with authority delegated by the Executive Director, Aircraft Certification Service, as authorized by FAA Order 8000.51C. In accordance with that order, issuance of ADs is normally a function of the Compliance

and Airworthiness Division, but during this transition period, the Executive Director has delegated the authority to issue ADs applicable to transport category airplanes to the Director of the System Oversight Division.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

1. Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866;

2. Is not a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);

3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska; and

4. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by removing Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2017-07-07, Amendment 39-18845 (82 FR 18547, April 20, 2017), and adding the following new AD:

Airbus: Docket No. FAA-2018-0111; Product Identifier 2017-NM-059-AD.

(a) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

This AD replaces AD 2017-07-07, Amendment 39-18845 (82 FR 18547, April 20, 2017) ("AD 2017-07-07").

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to the airplanes, certificated in any category, identified in paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this AD, all manufacturer serial numbers on which Airbus Modification 44360 has been embodied in production.

(1) Airbus Model A330-201, -202, -203, -223, -243, -301, -302, -303, -321, -322, -323, -341, -342, and -343 airplanes.

(2) Airbus Model A340-212, -213, -312, and -313 airplanes.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 53, Fuselage.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a report of cracking at fastener holes located at frame (FR) 40 on the lower shell panel junction. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking at FR40 on the lower shell panel junction; such cracking could lead to reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Compliance Times for the Actions Required by Paragraph (h) of this AD

Accomplish the actions required by paragraph (h) of this AD at the times specified in paragraphs (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD, as applicable.

(1) For airplanes having serial numbers 0176 through 0915 inclusive: Within the compliance times defined in table 1 to paragraph (g)(1) of this AD, and, thereafter, at intervals not to exceed the compliance times defined in Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3215, Revision 02, dated November 23, 2016 ("A330-53-3215, R2"); or Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4215, Revision 02, dated November 23, 2016 ("A340-53-4215, R2"); as applicable, depending on airplane utilization and configuration. As of the effective date of this AD, where paragraph 1.E. "Compliance," of A330-53-3215, R2 specifies weight variant (WV)050 in the condition column of table 1, configuration 003, for the purposes of this AD, WV060 and WV080 are also included.

Table 1 to Paragraph (g)(1) of this AD – *Compliance Time for Initial Inspection*

	Compliance time (whichever occurs later, A or B)
A	Before exceeding the compliance time "threshold" defined in table 1 of A330-53-3215, R2; or A340-53-4215, R2; as applicable, depending on airplane utilization and configuration and to be counted from airplane first flight.
B	For Model A330 airplanes: Within 2,400 flight cycles or 24 months, whichever occurs first after May 25, 2017 (the effective date of AD 2017-07-07). For Model A340 airplanes: Within 1,300 flight cycles or 24 months, whichever occurs first after May 25, 2017 (the effective date of AD 2017-07-07).

(2) For all airplanes except those identified in paragraph (g)(1) of this AD: Before exceeding the applicable compliance time "threshold" defined in paragraph 1.E., "Compliance," of A330-53-3215, R2; or A340-53-4215, R2; as applicable, depending on airplane utilization and configuration and to be counted from airplane first flight, and, thereafter, at intervals not to exceed the compliance times specified in paragraph 1.E., "Compliance" of A330-53-3215, R2; or A340-53-4215, R2; as applicable, depending on airplane utilization and configuration. Where paragraph 1.E. "Compliance," of A330-53-3215, R2 specifies weight variant WV050 in the condition column of table 1, configuration 003, for the purposes of this AD, WV060 and WV080 are also included.

(h) Repetitive Inspections and Related Investigative and Corrective Actions

At the applicable compliance times specified in paragraph (g) of this AD: Accomplish a special detailed inspection of the 10 fastener holes located at FR40 lower shell panel junction on both left-hand and right-hand sides, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of A330-53-3215, R2; or A340-53-4215, R2; as applicable.

(1) If, during any inspection required by the introductory text of paragraph (h) of this AD, any crack is detected, before further flight, accomplish all applicable related investigative and corrective actions, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of A330-53-3215, R2; or A340-53-4215, R2; as applicable, except where A330-53-3215, R2; or A340-53-4215, R2; specifies to contact Airbus for repair instructions, and specifies that action as "RC," this AD requires repair before further flight using a method approved by the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; or European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA); or Airbus's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(2) If, during any inspection required by the introductory text of paragraph (h) of this AD, the diameter of a fastener hole is found to be outside the tolerances of the transition fit as specified in A330-53-3215, R2; or A340-53-4215, R2; as applicable; and A330-53-3215, R2; or A340-53-4215, R2; specifies to contact Airbus for repair instructions, and specifies that action as "RC," before further flight, repair using a method approved by the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) Accomplishment of corrective actions, as required by paragraph (h)(1) of this AD, does not constitute terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by the introductory text of paragraph (h) of this AD.

(4) Accomplishment of a repair on an airplane, as required by paragraph (h)(2) of this AD, does not constitute terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by the introductory text of paragraph (h) of this AD for that airplane, unless the method approved by the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA indicates otherwise.

(i) No Reporting Requirement

Although A330-53-3215, R2 and A340-53-4215, R2, specify to submit certain information to the manufacturer, and specify that action as "RC," this AD does not include that requirement.

(j) Credit for Previous Actions

This paragraph provides credit for the inspections required by the introductory text of (h) of this AD and the related investigative and corrective actions required by paragraph (h)(1) of this AD, if those actions were performed before May 25, 2017 (the effective date of AD 2017-07-07), using Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3215, dated June 21, 2013; or Revision 01, dated April 17, 2014; or Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4215, dated June 21, 2013; or Revision 01, dated April 17, 2014; as applicable.

(k) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards

District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Section, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (l)(2) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov. Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(2) Contacting the Manufacturer: As of the effective date of this AD, for any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) Required for Compliance (RC): Except as required by paragraphs (g)(1), (g)(2), (h)(1), (h)(2), and (i) of this AD: If any service information contains procedures or tests that are identified as RC, those procedures and tests must be done to comply with this AD; any procedures or tests that are not identified as RC are recommended. Those procedures and tests that are not identified as RC may be deviated from using accepted methods in accordance with the operator's maintenance or inspection program without obtaining approval of an AMOC, provided the procedures and tests identified as RC can be done and the airplane can be put back in an airworthy condition. Any substitutions or changes to procedures or tests identified as RC require approval of an AMOC.

(l) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA AD 2017-0063, dated April 12, 2017, for related information. This MCAI may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at http://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0111.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone: 425-227-1138; fax: 425-227-1149.

(3) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office – EAL, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone: +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax: +33 5 61 93 45 80; email: airworthiness.A330-A340@airbus.com; Internet: http://www.airbus.com. You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Standards Branch, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on February 9, 2018.

Michael Kaszycki,
Acting Director,
System Oversight Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.
[FR Doc. 2018-03212 Filed: 2/16/2018 8:45 am; Publication Date: 2/20/2018]